



Steve Olsen Photo

Nate Nelson of Bridal Veil Inspects site of old toll bridge.

Bridal Veil Falls Supporters Looking for True Authenticity

By VICKI BARKER
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Authenticity is the goal but also one obstacle in continuing efforts to spiff up park facilities just below Bridal Veil Falls in Provo Canyon.

The Scenic Canyon Preservation Society is also having trouble persuading the Utah County Commission to rezone the area to allow for more parking, an amphitheater and recreational types of facilities including barbecue pits.

The society is ready to rebuild an old toll bridge that used to cross Provo River to the south side of the canyon. But they lack a photograph or drawing to work from, said trustee David Grow, owner of the Bridal Veil Falls operation.

The society spent \$35,000 on improvements at the old Rotary Park, renamed Bridal Veil Falls Park under a lease with Provo City.

Rebuilding the old toll bridge as authentically as possible is part of the larger scheme.

"It's impossible for me to imagine that somebody doesn't have a picture of someone posing with his girlfriend or new car in front of the toll bridge," Grow said.

The society last spring began searching for a picture of the bridge, but the state roads department, photographers and various other agencies could find none in their collections, Grow said.

Society trustee Nate Nelson said a private donor promises half the \$30,000 needed to rebuild the bridge. "We are looking for other donors and exploring grants for the other half."

The new Provo-Jordan River Parkway trail, due for completion in June, will follow the old road over the bridge.

"We're doing a lot of this in conjunction with the Provo-Jordan

dan River Parkway Authority," Nelson pointed out.

Grow said the society would like the old bridge rebuilt when the trail opens; even better, in time for official opening of Bridal Veil Falls Park about Memorial Day. Nelson noted the park opening will coincide with an arts festival there.

The old highway wound along the south side of the canyon in the late 1800s. Grow said apparently the old toll bridge was built about 1865.

"It appears it was 1927 when the road was moved from the south side to the north side, in the vicinity of Bridal Veil, just before you get to the falls," Grow said.

The parkway trail will be surfaced from the beginning of the canyon up to the falls, Nelson said. On the drawing board is a second trail starting at the park and winding its way to the base of the water falls, Nelson said.

The Bridal Veil Falls Park offers picnicking areas, fire pits, and landscaped areas for recreation such as volleyball, he said. "We also have exercise stations all along the park, kind of like the VITA course."

Future plans are to build a baseball diamond and within two years, rebuild a swinging cable bridge that spanned the river, Nelson said.

"People, from who I've talked to, really enjoyed going across that bridge, so we're looking for donations for that too," he said.

The scenic society and Bridal Veil Falls operators appealed again to the county commission to rezone the area so more parking could be provided audiences at theatrical performances at an amphitheater they anticipate building.

The capacity of the parking lot at the falls now is only 40 vehicles, not counting unimproved parking space across Highway

189.

Putting in parking and building an amphitheater would require changing status of land across the railroad tracks on the south side of the canyon from Critical Environment to Trades and Services.

Grow says the rezone would allow not only more parking but also use of the area for group assemblies, barbecuing facilities and recreational activities such as hiking.

Also, there is a possibility of Bridal Veil Falls again serving as terminus for the Heber Creeper steam train.

Despite support from various county and Provo City officials, the commission denied the rezone request again this week.

Administrative assistant Brent Morris said commissioners are concerned about traffic in and out of the Bridal Veil Falls developments.

He said the developers felt a rezone and building permit would increase the likelihood the state would include an exit off the highway as part of its road project.

"It's one of those things the commissioners would like to see happen, but I think their first regard is the safety of the people and the congestion of traffic up the canyon," Morris said.

"The concern they had was not so much the parking as the concern of people exiting the parking lots all at the same time after attending the theater," he explained.

"Even though parking lots would be available, the commissioners fear people would abuse the parking and park on the highway still, even with the additional parking lots down below."

The administrator said Commissioner Oniel Miner is going up next week to take a look at the situation.